

# INDIA

*calls you*



# INDIA *calls you*

India, that great sub-continent of Asia, is a land of mystery and a land of great contrasts, of fabulous wealth and dire poverty, of extreme cold and intense heat, of high education and widespread illiteracy. It presents one of the greatest challenges to post-war missionary enterprise.

## SIZE AND POPULATION

India is approximately three fifths the size of the United States of America, and into this area are crowded 390 million people, or about three times the population of the U.S.A. This is equivalent to the combined populations of North America, South America and Africa. There are in India eleven provinces, each enjoying self government but responsible to a central authority. In addition there are 562 Native States, each ruled over by an Indian Prince, exercising autonomous rule within the confines of his own domain.

## LANGUAGES AND ILLITERACY

This vast population speaks over 225 different languages, which fact naturally forms a strong racial barrier between the different sections of the community. English is the one

language which is spoken all over India. While elementary education is freely provided for all, racial and caste prejudices have prevented the majority from taking advantage of this provision. Illiteracy abounds on every hand and according to the 1941 census only 12% of the population over 5 years of age can read and write.

## RELIGIONS

Sixty-two per cent of the population, or approximately 250 million people, are devotees of the 330 million gods of Hinduism, while 24 per cent, or about 80 million, are Mohammedans. The remaining 10 per cent are divided among Jains, Sikhs and the animistic faiths of the hill tribes people. There are only seven million listed as Christian, including Roman Catholic and Protestant. Complete religious freedom is guaranteed in India by the constitution, and no barriers are put in the way of preaching the Gospel.

## CASTES

Hinduism is cursed by a caste system imposed upon it from time immemorial. There are four main castes, subdivided into innumerable sections, which create social and economic barriers that education can never surmount. Then there are about 70 million outcastes, or "untouchables", who are beyond the pale of caste and live in villages apart, ostracized from all other society by reason of their birth, and virtually slaves to the upper classes.

## POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

For some years now there has been agitation among India's leaders for a greater measure of self government. Rivalry between the two leading religious factions, Hindus and Moslems, has resulted in many serious riots and bloodshed, and has been one of the greatest hindrances to the granting of political freedom. But in recent years the people themselves have come to a large measure of agreement, and the British Crown has guaranteed a new constitution to India immediately at the close of the present war, whereby the people themselves will have the right to choose either Dominion status or complete independence.

## MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

Since the days of William Carey, Christian Missions have operated in all parts of India, and yet today Christians number only seven million, and many of these are Christian in name only. Possibly because of the poverty of the mass of the people and the general desire to raise them to a higher social status, much of the missionary effort has been concentrated on institutional work, with the result that many of the people have been Westernized without becoming true children of God. While 89% of India's population live in 500,000 villages all over the land, 70% of the available missionary staff work in the cities, and, according to "The Directory of Christian Missions for 1941", there are less than 400 missionaries who are free for evangelistic work. This is a

tragic state of affairs, and there is a crying need today for Spirit-filled missionaries who will devote themselves wholeheartedly to telling out the old Gospel story of Jesus and His love.

## THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The majority of the seven million Christians come from among the "untouchables", and because of their extreme poverty and outcaste conditions, progress in the development of the Christian church has been slow. Nevertheless in places where the emphasis has been placed on Bible teaching and scriptural methods of evangelistic work, self supporting indigenous churches have developed, and these, managed entirely by Indians under Indian pastorates, have contributed largely to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ.

## POST-WAR OPPORTUNITIES

With the war actually having been brought to the soil of India, her social, political, and economic outlook has undergone great changes in recent years, and with the granting of self government in the post-war era, we can look for a changed attitude toward the Western world. It is the hope of many that India will rise to a new place in world affairs. Educational facilities are to be extended. Inequalities are to be done away, and economic standards raised. Whether the guarantee of religious freedom will be continued under the new constitution, we do not know. But in this vast

land of India with its teeming millions, the missionary forces should be ready to carry forward the Gospel standard and to seize upon every opportunity to promulgate the Good News of salvation.

## CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE

One final word. Now is the time to pray as never before that God will keep the Gospel doors open in this great land. Poor, down-trodden, caste-ridden India needs born-again missionaries who will be ready to meet the challenge of the coming days, should our Lord tarry, with the dynamic message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Dear reader, may God burn into your heart the need of the millions of unsaved in India. Twenty-seven thousand die in India every day. May God help you to see the vision, and then to dedicate yourself to pray, to give, or to go, that many might be saved ere it is forever too late.

---

Issued by the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America. Sample copies of this and other pamphlets will be sent free (complete set 15c) and orders filled by addressing the I. F. M. A., 373 Carlton Avenue, Brooklyn 5, New York.